

OUTLINE OF CULTURE IN MALEKULA

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the progressive increase in skill in the rearing of tuskers (another feature to be discussed later), these have on the whole improved in quality during each successive generation, and the memory of these improvements, resulting in ever greater curvature of the tusks, adds to the prestige of those who sacrificed them and also to that of their descendants. These facts, handed down from father to son, together with the ancestral stone monuments standing in every village dancing-ground, form a historical framework by the aid of which the natives of the Small Islands preserve a mass of information regarding their past history, and of the personalities and exploits of their ancestors. Since most of the facts so preserved are centred round the successive performances of the Maki, there can be no doubt at all that this historical sense is part and parcel of the megalithic culture it represents. There is also very little doubt that it is closely connected with patrilineal descent, for in Vao, where patrilineal descent has been comparatively recently introduced and the dolmen representing the female principle is still the chief monument erected, the genealogies do not go back more than nine generations. In Atchin, on the contrary, where patrilineal influence is stronger and monoliths representing the male principle have largely supplanted the former use of the dolmen as the chief sacrificial monument, they go back nineteen generations to the slaying by two brothers of an aboriginal man-eating ogre named Ias associated with an older layer of culture, memories of which still survive in South Raga, where legends are told of mythical baby-snatchers called *ias*, and the same word is used also as an honourable title for successful killers of men.¹ The two Atchin brothers said to have killed Ias nineteen generations ago were clearly the last representatives on this island of the former system of overt matrilineal descent, since their successor Iwas was their sister's son, and it was this man Iwas who introduced the existing system of overt patrilineal descent through which the inhabitants of the chief village on this now patrilocal island trace kinship with him, the youngest boy at the time of my visit belonging to the seventeenth generation of his descendants in the direct male line.

"STONE MEN"

The importance of monoliths in tracing descent is due almost certainly to the fact discussed on p. 699, that these monuments, now consisting of plain coral blocks, for the most part undressed, represent what at one time in the history of this culture were stone statues carved to represent the dead. Thus some of the monoliths erected for the higher ranks in the district of Senlang in South-West Bay (which in turn were derived,

¹ Tattetin, 1, 1926, pp. 409, 410; also 2, 1931, Tales XXIX, p. 879 and XXX, pp. 880-1. The same personage figures in the mythology of Oba as the man-eating ogre Taso (Codrington, 3, pp. 398-402).

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532 as already stated, from Lambumbu, some twenty miles up the coast) are
 778 still carved to represent most parts of the human figure, while on those
 775 set up for some of the lower though still elevated ranks the carving
 is restricted to mere representations of the human face. This would
 explain the phenomenon already mentioned that is found all over Male-
 kula, that the ghosts of all ancestors who have previously performed the
 rite inhabit or hover near these monoliths. This belief in the in-dwelling
 of the ghosts of the dead in stone, well known in many forms of megalithic
 culture, has, in Malekula and the surrounding islands, been extended in
 two directions. In the first place, any natural coral or stone block of
 unusually large dimensions or otherwise interesting appearance is apt to
 be indicated as the dwelling-place, or even the petrified person, of some
 mythical hero. This is particularly the case in those districts observing
 the later forms of Maki ritual in which monoliths are the chief type of
 monument erected. Thus on Atchin the Guardian Ghost, who, for reasons
 given below, is thought to be a woman, is conceived of in two different
 ways. In the first place, she is thought of as a culture-heroine who once
 lived on the island and, as such, is represented by a very ancient dressed
 monolith standing by the roadside at the site of what was once part of
 the chief village but which has since been abandoned, and by the side
 of this is another dressed monolith representing her daughter. In the
 second place, she is, however, thought of as the mythological Being already
 described who stands ready to devour the ghosts of the dead if not duly
 propitiated, and in this capacity is in the Atchin and Wala versions of the
 story¹ conceived of as dwelling in a great natural coral block standing
 on the reef forty miles away down the coast of Malekula at a spot whence
 the dead of all the Small Islands who have duly performed all the
 necessary rites take their departure to the Land of the Dead situated in
 the crater of the great active volcano on Ambrim. In the same way her
 ten mythical grandsons who are among the chief culture-heroes on
 Atchin are to be seen today in the form of ten coral rocks of varying shape
 and size on the coast of that island. Yet other culture-heroes, many of
 whose names begin with the syllable *Bat* meaning "stone," are said to
 have been coral blocks capable of detaching themselves from the surround-
 ing reef and travelling to and fro between Atchin and certain other
 islands whence their descendants are said to have come.

778 Finally, among the Big Nambas inhabiting the North Malekulan
 622 plateau, this quality is shared even by living men whose ancestry is of
 particular importance, as seen in the fact reported by Miss Cheesman
 that the chiefs of at least one village in this district all have the same
 syllable, here pronounced *Pat*, suffixed to their personal names.²

¹ For a comparison of this story with that told on Vao, see pp. 218 ff.

² Cheesman, p. 181. This name is probably also equivalent to *Ambat* and *Kuat* (see pp. 209, 493).

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Other cases of the in-dwelling of ancestors in stone will be met with in the course of this work, and it is for this reason, coupled with the natives' absorption in megalithic ritual, that I have chosen the title "Stone Men of Malekula."

DIFFUSION OF MEGALITHIC CULTURE

How this megalithic culture came to be present in Malekula and its neighbouring islands it is outside the scope of this work to enquire. It may on the one hand be the case that this corner of Melanesia represents an isolated backwater left behind from the great stream of megalithic culture that Dr. W. J. Perry and the late Professor Sir Grafton Elliot Smith consider to have originated in the ancient centres of civilisation and to have been borne along maritime routes to the Malay Archipelago and thence across the Pacific to Easter Island and to the American continent where it gave the impetus which led to the rise of the great pre-Columbian cultures. There are of course many pitfalls in handling a subject of such magnitude, and particularly in defining what megalithic culture is. It must be remembered that this phrase covers many aspects of culture other than the mere use of stone monuments, as these writers never cease to point out and as their detractors constantly ignore. The phrase "megalithic culture" is thus used to refer to a very definite culture-complex for which no better name exists, and is convenient simply because the stone monuments are the most durable aspect of it in a world in which material objects not only outlive their creators but are also so much more easy to observe and describe than the ideas which give rise to their creation. Another difficulty arises as to the size of the stone monuments referred to, since there is clearly at first sight a considerable difference between the chambered galleries of the Mediterranean area and the dolmens of Vao, between Cleopatra's Needle and small monoliths, or between the stepped ziggurats of Mesopotamia and the stone-platforms of Malekula. A point in common, however, about all these and innumerable similar monuments over a wide area is that, comparatively small as may be those found in outlying places such as Cornwall on the one hand or the New Hebrides on the other, they are in no case the work of individual men but are the result of a communal effort which, not being utilitarian in the material sense, indicates a religious attitude sufficiently deep-rooted to justify the considerable labour entailed in their erection. Since some phrase must be used to describe this widespread phenomenon (and in a work which is purely descriptive of Small Island culture no obligation rests on the author to prosecute comparative studies), the phrase "megalithic" is here used quite non-committally to refer to monuments erected from a religious motive of stones too large to be lifted by hand but need-

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[133] beauty of Vao. Here, facing the channel, on the island's south-western shore, is the lovely beach called Kowu,¹ forming a long shallow bay, bounded on its north-western extremity by a wide reef. If we have the
 505 good fortune to arrive not too early in the morning, before the exodus to the mainland has begun, we may see no fewer than eighty canoes ranged side by side, following the curve of the beach, high up on the sand, out of reach of the tide. Slowly the natives come down, the men with their guns bought from white traders, without which they never move off the island, [482] the women with baskets, their babies on their backs, the children playing and occasionally helping.

After much talk and laughter, each family group will separately carry or drag its canoe down to the sea, and soon a fleet of perhaps fifty canoes will be crossing the channel, each heading for its own landing-place on the mainland opposite. If the wind is favourable, sails made of pandanus strips dyed red, plaited by the women and sewn together by the men, are hoisted, each shaped like an inverted triangle.² If there is no wind, or if it is in the wrong quarter, paddles alone must do the work, and the gay cries of the paddlers echo over the sea.

WALK THROUGH THE VILLAGE DANCING-GROUNDS

Men's paths and women's paths. The sacred way.

487 If, having watched this pleasing scene, we now turn towards the
 562 interior of the island, we find the choice of two paths. Perhaps a few stray natives are still coming down to the shore. Of these we notice that the men with confident air take one, while the women, more modest with their load of baskets, take the other. At the spot where the men come
 • [578] out on to the shore there is a wall of stones³ lining the path, which has been consecrated by the sacrifice of a large number of tusked boars. This marks the shoreward end of the great sacred way that leads from one end of the island to the other. The stone wall itself and the boars sacrificed
 [784] on it indicate among other things that this section of the way is taboo to women and to male children who have not yet taken the first step in their formal religious life by themselves sacrificing their first boars.

This way leads upwards towards the centre of the island. About thirty yards from its abutment on the shore it is joined by the women's path, and from here onward it may be used by women as well as men, since no further sanctified monuments lie on this part of the way. On approaching the first village dancing-ground, it divides once more, the

¹ Godefroy (1, 1933, p. 30), following his predecessor, Père Jamond, supposes this word to be derived from the English word "cove," and tells a circumstantial story to prove it. This is a false derivation. It is a native name and occurs in song-language as *ke-u*.

² See p. 460.

³ I did not record the name for this wall on Vao. In Atchin it is *na-uor*.

1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942

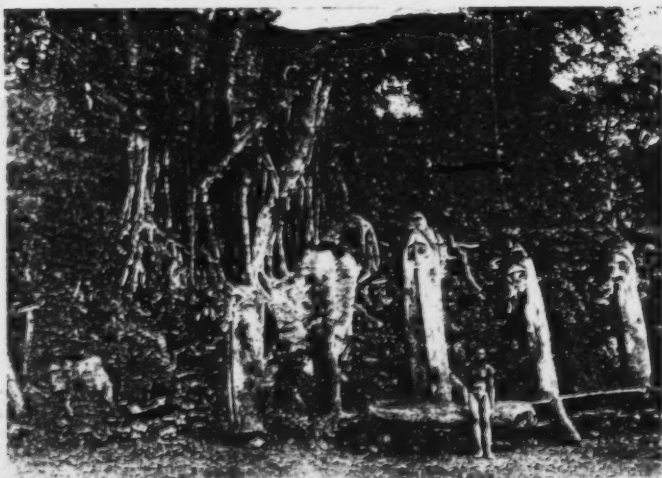
OO12* Malekula OO12

PLATE II. 1 and 2

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1. Original stone-platform at Pete-hul, on which cannibal feasts were held in a "cave" hollowed out from the aerial roots of the overhanging banyan tree. (See Frontispiece)
2. Gong-orchestra at Pete-hul, with Ma-taru leaning against an old prostrate gong used as a seat when playing the mother-gong

[facing p. 35]

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ancestral ghosts around whose cult the ritual which takes place in the dancing-ground centres.

Turning our backs now on the Lower Side, let us, with the aid of the panoramic view seen in the Frontispiece and Plates II and III, survey the high place where the chief sacrifices take place. From end to end the ground is about 300 feet long. Along the whole of the Upper Side, built on the slight elevation which forms one side of the valley, is a continuous platform of coral blocks carefully fitted together, rising to a height of 10 to 12 feet from the ground. This, though in appearance a continuous structure, is in fact a succession of contiguous stone-platforms on which the most important tusked boars are sacrificed.¹ On the extreme left is the enormous banyan tree already mentioned, some of the aerial roots of which have been carved away so as to form a kind of cave within the tree, where, on a part of the stone-platform rather lower than the rest, cannibal feasts were formerly held.

To the right of this in front of the stone-platform is a small dolmen and other upright stones, and to the right of these again stands proudly the orchestra of upright slit gongs, huge trunks of forest trees transported from the mainland, hollowed out through a longitudinal slit so as to leave only a thin shell of the original trunk. Above the slit is carved an image representing the face of the ancestral ghost, whose voice speaks when the gong is sounded by hitting one side of the slit with a soft-wood stick. The nose of the image is pierced, and from it hang the jaws of the tusked pigs sacrificed in its honour on the day of consecration. The tallest of these gongs is about 12 feet high, not counting the base buried in the ground. Since no sacred object is ever removed, but simply allowed to rot where it stood, the remains of old gongs are also seen, two leaning to the right, one lying in front, now used as a seat for casual use. Four different sizes of gongs go to make up an orchestra, and the complicated and indescribably stirring rhythms they beat out are the wonder of all who have the good fortune to hear them.²

Beyond the gongs, supported on three stakes, is a rack displaying the jaws of tusked pigs recently sacrificed in one of the innumerable performances that go to make up the protracted Maki rite. To the right of this is another small dolmen, and beyond this again is a cylindrical cane structure set up to protect a special yam and banana tree planted during the mortuary rites for an old man.³

To the right of these again are three large dolmens. These, as will be described later,⁴ were erected at successive performances of the Maki rite (as in the case of gongs, no sacred stone object is ever removed), and are the stone altars at which other important tusked pigs are sacrificed.

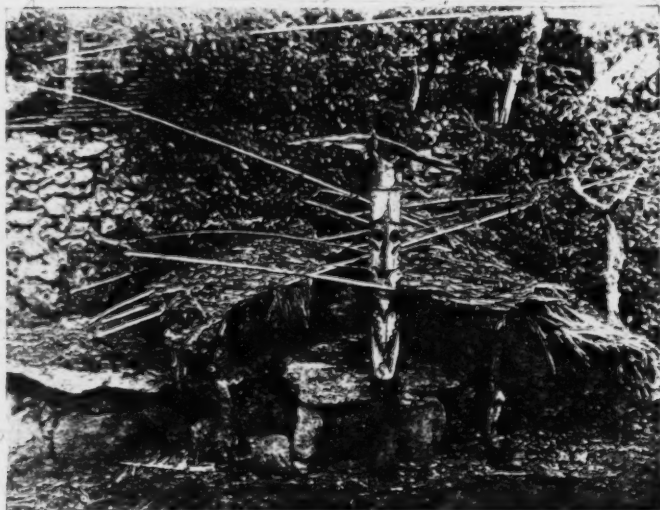
¹ For details of the sacrifices performed here and at the other stones see pp. 413 ff., 430.

² For details see pp. 311 ff.

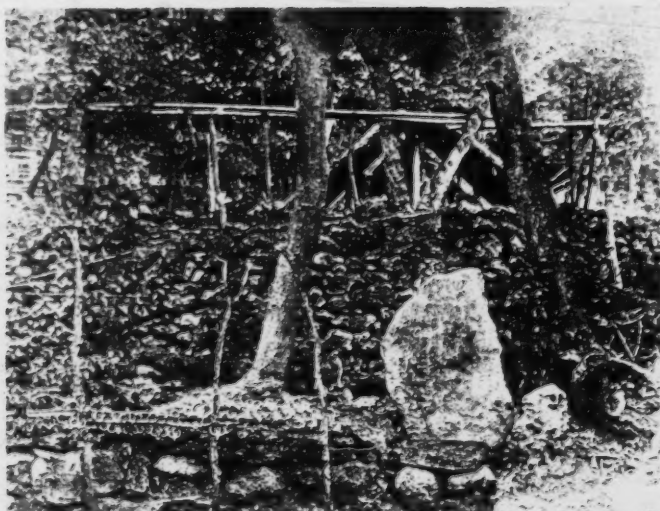
³ See p. 550.

⁴ See p. 414.

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1. Dolmens at Pete-hul. The roof supported by the ancestor-image on the right has collapsed, causing the hawk-image over its head to fall away. (See Frontispiece)
2. Large monolith and small dolmens on which lie the remains of a rack displaying the tusked jaws of sacrificial boars. Note the stone-platform behind. (See Frontispiece)

[facing p. 36]

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- 36 Of these three, the latest to have been erected is still surmounted by the rotting remnants of the shrine with which all monuments are covered when in use, and faced with the ancestor-image which forms the forepost of the shrine. Beyond these is another rack displaying the jaws of sacrificed tuskers, behind which is yet another disused dolmen, and finally, a monolith erected during the course of the rites at which high-grade tusked boars have been sacrificed and which is now both the memorial and dwelling-place of ancestral ghosts.
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The ghamal.

- 344 Dominating the whole scene, behind the stone-platforms and partly hidden by trees, is a long thatched wooden building, nearly 100 feet in length, open at each end, and with its ridge-poles decorated at either end with a gigantic image of a hawk with spread wings cut from the buttress roots of a forest tree. This is the central village lodge, or *ghamal*, the roofed counterpart of the dancing-ground, where the old men congregate in bad weather for debates, and where all business connected with the Maki is conducted. This building, too tall to be included in the panorama, can be studied in Plate VII and Fig. 53. Part of the bamboo fence surrounding it is to be seen, however, on the panorama towards the right-hand side above the stone-platform. This *ghamal* had been erected only a short time before my arrival. As with the gongs and other sacred objects, no *ghamal*, even when past use, is ever pulled down, as may be seen by the rotting roof of the previous, now deserted, building seen at the extreme right hand of the picture.

Story of origin.

- 773 The spot we now stand on is that on which, according to legend, the creator-deity Ta-ghar founded the village of Pete-hul, by causing a certain fruit to fall which, splitting on the buttress root of a tree, gave rise to the first man and woman, and here their first son cleared away the bush to make his dancing-ground.¹ Behind, in the cliff flanking the north-western coast, is a series of caves called *mbarang*, the largest of which is behind the Upper Side of the dancing-ground where the creation took place, and it is for this reason that this quarter of the village is called *La-mbarang*, meaning "At the Cave."²

Togh-vanu and Tolamp.

- 36 Leaving this sacred place now by its northern end, we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by houses. This is one of the centres of the village,

¹ See pp. 82, 89.

² The sides of the ravine leading to the cave are planted with coconut trees stretching right up to the great banyan tree already seen. Speiser (3, p. 92) refers to buta built partly under the rocks, and says that the natives sometimes make fires and cook there.

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361 from the other, one side containing the double village of Pete-hul-Togh-vanu (to which Tolamp has attached itself) through which we have just come, and the other containing the four remaining villages of the island paired into two double-villages called respectively Peter-ih-i-Venu and

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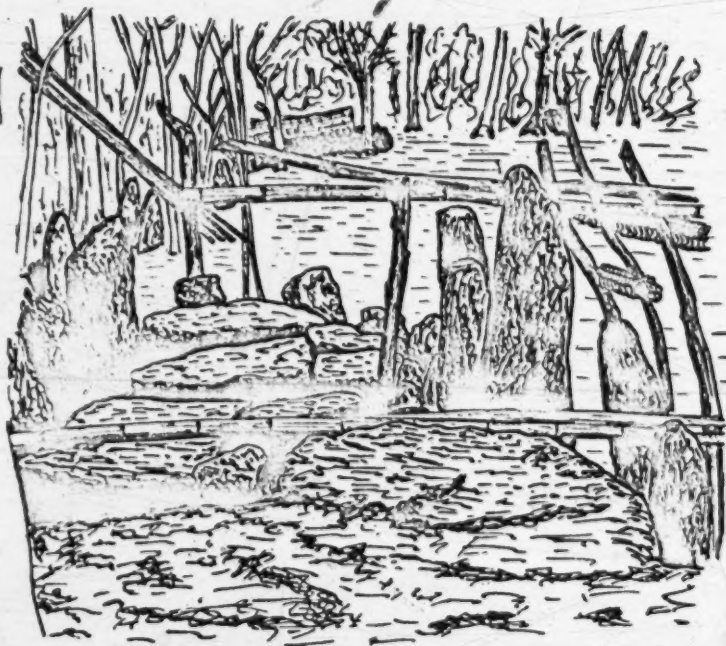


FIG. 2

View of some of the dolmens and monoliths behind the racks displaying the jaws of tusked boars at Togh-vanu seen in Plate XVII. The backs of two of these racks, rather inadequately represented owing to their foreshortened position, are seen to the extreme right. The drawing is made from a position on the table-stone of one of the dolmens. The stakes and transverse bamboos in the centre are the remains of the now rotted roofs once forming part of the shrines erected over the dolmens. To the left are some fresh bamboos ready for the construction of the shrine over the stone-platform seen in Plate XVIII. In the background towards Peter-ih-i are the wall and surmounting fence surrounding a house-enclosure.

Singon-Norohure. This asymmetrical dual organisation will be described in the following chapter, and the forces giving rise to it in the sections on Kinship.

Peter-ih-i-Venu.

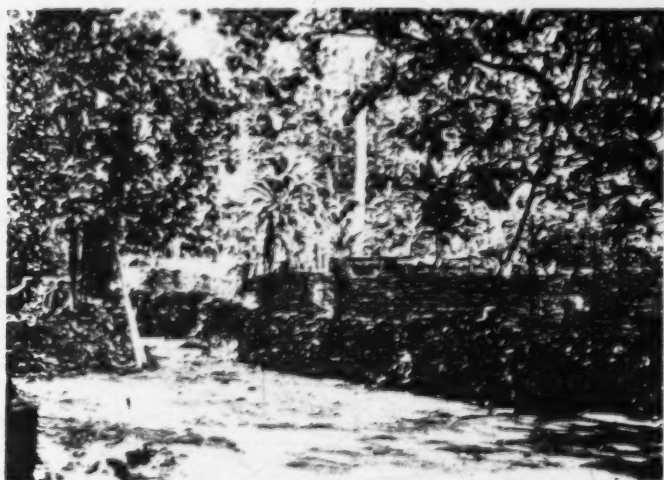
To the superficial eye there is, however, no visible division, and, after passing a single house-enclosure on either side of the way we find our-

PLATE IV, 1 and 2

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1. "Fore-stone" shrine (see p. 425, erected for Low Maki at Petri-
ihli, typical of the ten shrines set up in connection with the
monolith-Maki recently introduced on the Inferior Side of Vanu.)
2. Village street, showing stone walls surmounted by reed fences
surrounding each house-enclosure. (Speiser, 3, Plate 15, Fig. 4)

[facing p. 39]

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They take hold of a young pig that has already got its permanent teeth. . . . Its owner sits on a tree trunk or other convenient seat, and holds its head fast between his hands; horizontally across its open mouth is placed a piece of wood to prevent it from biting; then the operator kneels in front of the patient. Armed with a kind of chisel cut from the branch of an orange tree, and with a hammer, or simply a stone, he taps repeatedly one side of the tooth¹ and then the other. In this way, it takes a whole morning to extract the first canine; at midday they rest, so does the animal; it takes the rest of the day to finish the operation. Before letting the animal go, they rub ashes into the still bleeding gums.²

"After a year, that is to say when the canines of the lower jaw have grown sufficiently to push up the cheeks,³ they lead the animal on to the dancing-ground one day when some rite is in progress; ⁴ it then undergoes its first consecration, other pigs being sacrificed for it; then it is declared *ni-mal*.⁵ Three years later, when the tusks have made a complete circle, it is consecrated for a second time; it then becomes *meltek*.⁶ When the tusk has completed its second circle, the pig will be consecrated *na-humbe*⁷ and, some time later, *na-humbe se*.⁸

"These three honours, these three ranks, will be transferred to its owner on the ritual occasion when the latter sacrifices it.

"Meanwhile, it is itself, from the moment of its first consecration, elevated to the dignity of man.⁹ This consecration into the rank of *ni-mal* confers on it the initial stages of the soul of a chief¹⁰—which perfects itself when it attains the rank of *meltek* and attains the apotheosis of honour when it becomes *na-humbe se*.

"Here are the proofs. From the day when it becomes *ni-mal*, by taking this rank in the dancing-ground, the pig becomes, for its owner, the object of a semi-religious respect; at all events he treats it as his equal. He feeds it with the remains of his own meals and builds for it a small hut, not very imposing, it is true, but at least a shelter where he keeps it tied up night and day, for it may no more run about.

"When they are moved, these 'lord pigs' are treated with the greatest respect, never hit or insulted in any way. When they are at rest, their movements are followed, their looks observed . . . a meaning is found for their grunts and for their sighs. With what loving attention their well-being and comfort is cared for!"

¹ I.e. the upper canine (*batin(e)*); cf. Mota *batin*, also applied to the eye-teeth in men.

² A full account of this operation as performed on Atchin will be given in a future volume. Ashes are frequently used as a disinfectant (see p. 311).

³ I.e. the pig has become a crescent-tusker.

⁴ He does not say what rite.

⁵ This is a Maki title (see pp. 431, 433).

⁶ This is another Maki title.

⁷ These are not properly speaking titles, but terms of respect (see pp. 220, 432, 693).

⁸ As we have seen above, it is actually the dignity of "ghost."

⁹ As elsewhere, Godefroy uses the term "chief" to denote "man of high rank."

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RESPECT SHOWN TO TUSKED BOARS ILLUSTRATED BY SCENES
FROM AMBRIM

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778 In illustration of this, Godefroy recounts several episodes observed during his service as missionary at Olal, on Ambrim. Though these did not occur on Vao, they are worth recording as being typical of the natives' attitude towards high-grade tusked boars throughout the Northern New Hebrides. On one occasion, when preaching at the village of Fanlah, he sat on the ground with his back to a small hut in which there was a low door. He noticed that the natives' attention was riveted on what was in progress inside the hut.

"Leaning towards the small half-open door, I became aware of a man sitting on the earthen floor, lifting with great care the tail of an enormous *na-humbe*¹ comfortably lying in a depression in the ground. Piously and religiously with the other hand he was collecting in a large leaf, and rolling it up in it, the product of the heavings and sighs of the *na-humbe*. When he had in this way presented and subsequently rolled up three such leaves, he carefully placed them alongside a pile of leaves not yet used. I had not lost a detail of all this scene, but what astonished me most was that my audience had been equally absorbed in face of the pressing needs of the sacred pig. . . .

"Another time, also on Ambrim . . . close to the entrance to the small dancing-ground of Meluar, I was overtaken by a sudden rainstorm and only just had time to take refuge in the nearest hut. An unexpected sight awaited me. The hut was small, and was almost entirely occupied by an enormous boar whose tusks described a double circle: it was a *le-ban-ban*!² a sacred boar. Lazily lying on the ground, it completely filled a large basin-shaped depression in the ground. Two men, of between thirty and forty years of age, were watching it. They seemed to understand perfectly the animal's grunts and sighs. One of them suddenly went outside and split open a coconut which he took from a pile of other green coconuts stored close by in the shade. The liquid from this he poured into a gourd, and, as an inferior to a superior, and with the same deference, with the help of his companion presented the cool beverage to the 'lord' *le-ban-ban*. All this took place in a religious silence, no word being spoken.

"Meanwhile, the rain had turned into a downpour, and, the shallow channel dug by the side of the hut not being deep enough to carry off all

¹ The use of the word *na-humbe* in this context is inaccurate, since it is not, so far as I know, used in Ambrim.

² Presumably the Meluar equivalent of the Vao *na-humbe*. Various forms of the word *ban* are used for Maki ranks in a number of districts. According to Tautevin (1, 1927, p. 85) *Li-banban* (from *ban*, meaning pig's tusk bracelet) is the ordinary word for tusked pig in the Pornowol district of South Raga.

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the water, the interior of the hut began to be flooded over. A grunt and a slight movement of the boar's spine conveyed to the watchful guardians the information that the deluge had already reached the august animal. Then, for the first time, I realised that there was another compartment in the hut occupied by women, also charged with the duty of tending to the needs of the presiding deity of the house. They also understood their lord's complaint, and immediately began to turn the invading stream by digging a fresh channel, diverting the water into their own compartment; not only this, but they further made sure of the water-tightness of the bottom of the transverse partition by placing along it the earth they had obtained from digging the channel. They now sat in the mud, but the 'lord' *le-ban-ban* continued to rest in his dry trench.

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"All this work had been accomplished in perfect silence, which continued after the storm was over. As I left, two young men came to relieve the others, and I heard the latter instructing them, 'He has just had a drink; you had better soon give him some dry coconuts to eat.'

"During the 1913 eruption on Ambrim, a man named *Nu-nur-mal*, chief of Likon, had been unable to tend his *le-ban-ban* for three days. On the fourth day he sent his daughter, saying, 'Wash him with water from the ravine, the spot which belongs to me; then make his bed. Then gather bread-fruit from the tree from which I myself eat, and roast one for him. While it is roasting, knock down a green coconut. Then you will find in my house a dry coconut. Split this, scrape out the kernel and give it immediately to my *le-ban-ban* to eat. After this, without hurrying, when the bread-fruit is properly cooked, peel it and cut it up, then place the pieces within easy reach of *le-ban-ban*. When he has eaten his fill, give him the green coconut to slake his thirst. Then clean out his hut, and when he has lain down in it again, don't forget to comb out the little tuft at the end of his tail which he waves so becomingly.' "

One boar on Atchin was of such high rank that no one could sacrifice it.

The above scenes, though witnessed on Ambrim, are typical of the attitude towards pigs throughout Malekula also. I have myself seen similar scenes on Atchin, where large fees, payable in money-mats, are demanded even for the honour of seeing a high-grade tusked boar. On that island, during the time I was there, there was one boar that was even too sacred to be sacrificed at all, the man for whose sake it had been raised to supernumerary rank having died before he could sacrifice it, and no one else on the island being of high enough rank to risk taking his place. There was therefore every likelihood that it would die, and that the years of rearing it would have been in vain, since its soul would then pass away without having conferred its rank upon any member of the community. This illustrates the negative aspect of identification, since, if a man were

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- 718 to sacrifice a boar advanced to a grade too far beyond his own in the
554 Maki hierarchy, the passage of the boar's soul into his would overwhelm him, and disaster would be sure to follow.¹

MASS SACRIFICE

- 782 Information regarding the details of sacrifice will be included in the chapters on the numerous sacrificial rites, and in particular that of the Maki. When it is realised that, on a single occasion at the culmination of the Maki rite, in addition to the circle-tuskers and tuskers of yet higher rank sacrificed by individual men, there is a mass sacrifice by the men of at least 100 tusked boars on the Upper Side of the dancing-ground as well as of 100 gelded tuskers on the Lower Side, the reader will be able in some measure to gauge the immense importance of these animals in native culture.

STONE IMAGE OF A PIG

- 532 Since I took no special photographs of live pigs on Vao, I here reproduce
324 one of the stone image of a pig which I was shown resting on a dolmen erected in front of a Lodge in the now deserted mainland village of Tolamp, the final resting-place of the inhabitants of the submerged island from which this village took its name, before the last remnants of them took up their abode on Vao.² The Lodge has long since rotted away, and the dolmen now stands alone, half-covered with bush. The image is 19 inches long, and is called *wuli*, said to be equivalent to the pidgin-English "larrikin," or ruffian, a term recalling the character of the Guardian Ghost. In the short time at my disposal, I was unable to discover what purpose it served. The tusks are clearly indicated, and there are two shallow depressions on the back. I asked whether they might be for kava, which, though not drunk by the people of Vao, is so used by the Big Nambas of the North Malekulan plateau, but my informant was unable to say whether this was the case or not. There is a record of two "pigs carved of stone" kept in a taboo place belonging to one of the Lodges in Matanavat, on the north coast of Malekula, said to be used for magical purposes.³ The only other example of a stone pig from the New Hebrides known to me, now in the Basel Museum für Völkerkunde, is said to come from Oba, and to have served as a kava bowl. Its back is hollowed out as though to receive

¹ Compare Deacon (4, p. 548), who says that in Seniang, the soul of a pig of well-developed tusk-curvature, such as a re-entrant-tusker (*imaap*) or higher grade, "is powerful, more powerful even than the spirit of some human beings. Thus if a small boy were to partake of the flesh of a pig of high grade, the *nivunün* [soul] of the animal would be stronger than the *nimwinin* [soul] of the child and would devour it, so that the boy would die." (The souls of pigs and human beings are called by different names.)

² See p. 58.

³ Harrison, 2, p. 59. Their magical use is not described.

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PLATE XII



Stone-platform at Norohure with ancestor-image surmounted by hawk-image forming the front of the ridge-pole supporting the roof

[Facing p. 271]

THE MAKI: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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FIG. 41

Shrine erected for the monolith-Maki recently adopted from Atchin by the village of Norohure on the Inferior Side of Vao. Each shrine consists of wooden image, dolmen and monolith. Note the hawk-image (with four wings) resting on the forked hat surmounting the image, and forming the front part of the ridge-pole of which the rear end rests on the monolith. The thatched roof supported by the ridge-pole has rotted away.

LOW MAKI

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building the dolmen. I have no record of the ritual accompanying the gathering of the supporting-stones. It is probable, therefore, that the work connected with this is done by the members of the introducing "line" only, and that there is no particular ritual, connected with it apart from the provision of the usual *tamean* feasts.

On the day appointed for setting up the dolmen, members of all the Vao villages and of those on the neighbouring mainland and Small Islands assemble in the home dancing-ground. When the table-stone was hauled up there was no "circling" for pigs. On this more important occasion, however, tusked boars are presented to the Maki-men by their relatives-in-law and duly "circled" for.¹

Dolmen erected.

Then all present assist in building the dolmen by raising the table-stone on to a number of smaller upright stones which keep it in place. I have unfortunately no record of how the table-stone is lifted, nor of the number of supporting-stones. Godefroy, however, though he makes no mention of the Maki, says, when describing the dancing-ground, that there are six such supporting-stones, arranged in two rows.² Since my photographs (see Plates III, XVI) give only a side-view, it is not possible to verify this. If it is true, however, the number is of interest as representing almost certainly the six patrilineal clans forming the six villages on Vao, and it is probable that the members of each village will assist in erecting one. Godefroy voices the obvious truth that this monument is "a true altar." He adds, moreover, another fact that I did not record about these stones, namely that the supporting-stones are called *pal-palon* and the table-stone *na-mpal*. Both words are derived, of course, from the verb *pal*, "to sacrifice," and therefore mean simply "object at or on which sacrifice is made." As we shall see, the sacrificial monoliths and small stones erected later on either side of the dancing-ground are similarly called *pal-pal na-mbd*. His record of the term *na-mpal* used for the table-stone would appear at first sight to conflict with the fact that this stone is also called *vet simba-simba*, meaning in ritual language "the stone we sit on," or "the stone of honour." There is, however, no real contradiction, since this stone serves more than one function, being in the first place that at which sacrifice is made, and in the second place having a holiness of its own both before and after the chief sacrifice takes place. The whole monument, including both table-stone and supports, is called *na-vot*, a word which, as shown later,³ is probably derived from the Indonesian *batu* meaning "to come out from," or "to be born," in this case with the connotation of re-birth.⁴

¹ See p. 303.² Godefroy, 1, 1932, p. 37.³ See p. 703.⁴ Compare Mota *vot*, "to emerge." See pp. 717, 733.

HIGH MAKI

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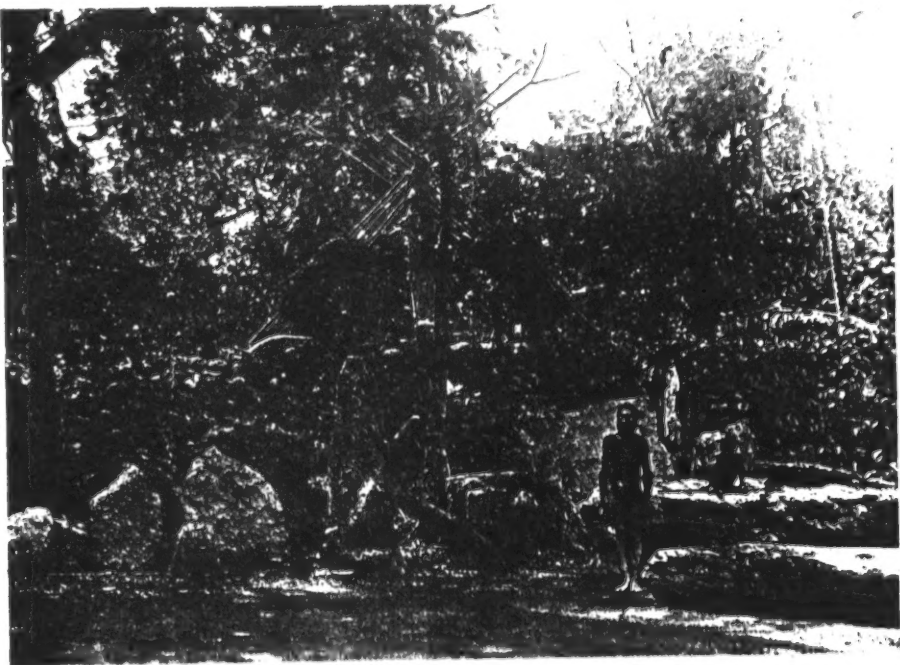
the members of the introducing "line" assemble in the dancing-ground, where they are regaled with puddings containing fowls made by the Maki-men and placed in their earth-ovens overnight. They then proceed to build the stone-platform, which from now on is called *vet nis-nas*. The platform is constructed of the dry coral blocks brought from the beach, without binding material of any kind but so skilfully placed that the front elevation facing the dancing-ground is almost vertical. When constructed on flat ground the rear elevation is sloped so as to allow the sacrificer to mount it. At Pete-hul, on the other hand, where a natural rise in the ground behind the Upper Side is utilised to give a heightened effect, while the platform as seen from in front is as much as twelve or fourteen feet high, its top is little if any higher than the level of the ground behind it. All this ground, however, is sacred in the sense that, being at the same time within the precincts of the *ghamal* which is situated immediately behind the Upper Side, it is taboo to women. Apart from this, however, as with all sacred monuments in the Small Islands, once it has been used and sacrificed at, it loses its sanctity to the extent that, though it may never be removed, there is no taboo against any man touching or treading on it.

The taboo against removal has one interesting result, of a kind that would puzzle a future archaeologist attempting to interpret the lay-out of the monument without direct knowledge from the natives of how it was constructed. For, though we know that more than one Maki has been performed at Pete-hul, if we look at the Frontispiece we shall see that there is, as a matter of fact, only a single, apparently continuous platform stretching from one end of the Upper Side to the other. Examination of the actual structure shows, however, that the front elevation is not quite straight, and in some places bulges slightly forwards. The reason for this is that, for the purpose of sharing in the sanctity of past performances, and possibly also for considerations of space, each new stone-platform is built touching the last, so that at any one moment all the stone-platforms that have been built for successive performances of the Maki look like a single one, and the length of the dancing-ground (which is but a widening-out of the sacred way) is in fact determined by the length of the composite platform so formed.¹

¹ The same continuity achieved by adding new monuments on to old is found also in South Raga, where the sacrificial stone for each new performance of the Lo-sal rite (corresponding to the sacrifice of High Maki in the Small Islands) is "added to those previously composing the altar" (Tattevin, 1, 1927, p. 90; see also present volume, p. 722), and also in the case of the *rots* of Malo referred to on p. 704. In the same way, during successive performances of the monolith-Maki in Atchin and Wala a fresh row of 100 monoliths is erected immediately in front of a similar number erected for the previous performance, thus producing, for the puzzlement of future archaeologists, a series of miniature stone avenues similar to, though smaller than, those found at Carnac and elsewhere. These will be illustrated in a future volume. A yet further archaeological puzzle relating to the orientation of graves is referred to on p. 534.

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PLATE XVIII



Stone monuments at Togh-vanu, including stone-platform (the partial thatching of which is a special "copyright" feature), and monoliths. The dolmen, against which leans Ma-taru, is partly obscured by a fallen gong

[facing p. 430]

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